News Releases
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Newfoundland Labrador

Education
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Minister Recognizes Unique Efforts to Promote a Love of Math

Students of Clarenville Middle School are holding the first Regional Math Fair today with a theme that speaks to a whole new outlook on mathematics. *For the Love of Math* will use games, puzzles and other activities to encourage a positive attitude toward math and how it's part of our day to day lives.

"I congratulate the teachers, staff and parents of Clarenville Middle Shool on a unique effort to get students excited about math and encourage increased interest and enthusiasm for the subject," said the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education.

The fair is funded under the Provincial Government's three-year, $11.3 million Excellence in Mathematics Strategy which was announced in Budget 2007. It is one of several taking place across the province over the next few months.

One of the goals of the Excellence in Mathematics Strategy is to foster a more positive view toward mathematics and is designed to provide additional support to students, teachers and parents. Minister Burke noted that progress is being made to address areas of concern identified by parents and teachers and help students with their performance.

Since September 2007, 25 numeracy support teachers have been working to assist teachers in the classroom and additional professional development opportunities are being provided to teachers. In addition, there have been changes to the curriculum, such as reducing the amount of material and concepts that must be covered and allowing for a greater concentration on basic concepts.

The Department of Education also engaged Dr. Bob Crocker to carry out a review of the K-12 mathematics curriculum. This review includes a summary of research in K-12 mathematics teaching and learning, a comparative analysis of provincial mathematics curriculum in Canada and in other countries, and an analysis of the strengths and challenges of the current mathematics curriculum in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"The review is a terrific source of information for the department, informed by, among other things, consultations with key stakeholders. It gives some solid directions on how we can improve our math programming to further address challenges identified by educators, parents and students themselves," said Minister Burke. "I anticipate releasing the report in the near future and outlining the directions we will take as we continue to move forward with the Excellence in Mathematics Strategy."

Minister Burke noted that it is encouraging to see teachers and students initiate and participate in activities that are fun and great learning experiences, like today's event at Clarenville Middle School. "We have a wonderful opportunity to chart a new course and attitude toward math, similar to what has been done with increasing awareness about the importance and enjoyment of reading and literacy," said Minister Burke. "There is no doubt that students in this province can perform to just as high a standard as students anywhere in the world. We will keep working to provide the support to make that happen."

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